

## AUTOMATED TRACKING OF CERTIFICATE PEDIGREE

## ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

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A method of automatically tracking a certificate pedigree is provided, in which a new user is provided with a piece of hardware containing a predetermined pedigree certificate stored therein, the predetermined pedigree certificate having a level of trust bearing a relationship to a category of hardware of which the provided piece of hardware is a member. An automated registration arrangement is provided which can be accessed only by users having a piece of hardware containing a predetermined pedigree certificate having a specified level of trust stored therein. When the new user accesses the automated registration arrangement using the provided piece of hardware, the automated registration arrangement provides the new user with an individual signature certificate having a level of trust commensurate with that of the pedigree certificate. The automated registration arrangement flags the new user's individual signature certificate with the level of trust of the pedigree certificate in an appropriate storage area, including the certificate itself.

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